

Reading Toolkit: Grade 3 Objective 3.A.6.a

Standard 3.0 Comprehension of Literary Text

Topic A. Comprehension of Literary Text

Indicator 6. Determine important ideas and messages in literary texts

Objective a. Identify and explain main ideas and universal themes

Assessment Limits:

In the text or a portion of the text

In the text or a portion of the text

Literal versus interpretive meanings of a text or a portion of text

Literal versus interpretive meanings of a text or a portion of text

Message, moral, or lesson learned from the text

Message, moral, or lesson learned from the text

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Lesson Seeds

Reading Grade 3 Objective 3.A.6.a

Activities

The teacher will place students in small groups and provide them with a literary text. After reading the text, students will be given envelopes which contain sentence strips. The sentence strips will list the main idea of the literary text, supporting details for that main idea, and details that do not support the main idea. The group of students must isolate the main idea and its supporting details from the available materials. Students will share their answers with other class members.

After students have read a required literary text, they will discuss the passage. During class discussion, the teacher will record the important ideas in the passage and ask students to give him/her supporting details for those important ideas. When the discussion is concluded, the teacher will place the students in small groups. Each group will be asked to create an alternate title for the passage and then present it to the rest of the class. During the presentation students will show how their title reflects an important idea in the passage.

Prior to reading, students will be asked to share times when someone did something kind for them or they were kind to another. The teacher will state that kindness is often a topic for themes in literary works. Students will then read Shel Silverstein's "The Giving Tree" or a like-themed literary passage. While students read these passages they should record the ways in which kindness is shown in these texts. After reading, students should share with the entire class the evidences of kindness they found. Next, with teacher assistance, students should form a theme statement for the text. Following this, the teacher should place students into small groups giving each group a text which they must read and analyze to complete the following chart.

Title	Theme Topic	Supporting Details for Theme	Theme Statement	Application to Real Life Situations

As texts are passed from one group to another, each text should be entered on the chart. Once all groups have seen all the texts, students will share their responses with the other members of the class.

As students read a novel or any longer literary work, they will track the development of theme. When appropriate at certain stages in the novel, teacher and students will isolate theme topics and will develop theme statements. In small groups or as an entire class with teacher direction, students will trace the beginning of the theme to its conclusion. Students will identify the origin of the theme. Did it begin with character, setting, or conflict or a combination of elements? Teacher Note: A suggested way for students to see the interrelatedness of narrative elements is to map the novel's plot and then alongside plot the origin and development of the theme/s. Once students have completed tracking the theme, in a class or small group discussion they should apply the theme to real-life situations.

Clarification

Reading Grade 3 Indicator 3.A.6

To show proficiency of the skills stated in this indicator, a reader will express an understanding of the key points or thoughts in a literary text which are the **important ideas and messages**. Sometimes these points are stated directly in the text. For other more complex texts, a reader must determine an implied, important idea or message by synthesizing ideas across the text.

To **identify, explain, and analyze main ideas and universal themes**, a reader must first identify the main idea of a text or a portion of a text. In order to do this, a reader must identify the topic or subject of the text. To determine what an author of a literary text has to say about the topic, a reader must attend to details that relate to or clarify the topic. This combination of topic and details forms the main idea. The main idea may be directly stated or implied and may appear in any portion of a text.

While a main idea is text-centered, a theme is author-centered. A story's theme is an author's message about a topic. To identify a theme of a literary text, a reader must first find broader important concepts in a text such as family, prejudice, courage, or love. A reader must observe carefully what characters say and do that relates to the theme topic. A theme is a combination of a "big" idea and what is said about that idea. A theme is a recurring idea in a text, but it also moves outside the text and applies to people in general, not just the characters in the story.

In more complex texts, theme can arise not only from character statements and actions but also from emotional and societal issues experienced by characters. These issues can be observed in changes in characters' values or beliefs, symbols, repeated words, or imagery. Readers can bring different interpretations to a text based upon their personal experiences. If evidence from a text can be provided to support a reader's suggestion about theme, then it is valid.

To **identify, explain, and analyze a similar idea or theme in more than one text**, a reader must first identify an idea or theme in each literary text. Once ideas or theme statements for each text are established, comparison between or among the texts can begin.

A reader may focus on similar ideas contained in multiple texts. A reader may focus on morals or lessons learned by characters contained in multiple texts. For younger readers, multicultural renderings of the same fairy tale are common. The conclusions drawn from similar texts are text-specific and based on many supporting details from each text.

A reader may focus on common experiences, emotions, issues, and ideas as sources for theme topic and statements in texts. The best conclusions drawn about theme across multiple texts are text specific, based on many supporting details from all texts. As comparisons among text themes continue, each theme must be analyzed carefully. Not only should the theme statement be considered but also how the author relayed the theme to the reader. For example, in one text, the strongest source for theme may have been character action, while in another text, the strongest source for theme may have been imagery. However, both texts may have similar themes that have been developed in different ways.

To **retell, paraphrase, or summarize a text**, a reader must first read and know the basic narrative elements of a text: the setting, character, and story events. When retelling, a reader must share the story in his/her own words, keeping story events in order.

Paraphrasing allows a reader to take a more complex text and make it understood by placing difficult ideas into simpler language. When a reader can tell a story in words that make sense to him/her, that reader is paraphrasing. As lengths of stories increase, multiple characters appear, and changes in setting occur within a text, paraphrasing increases in complexity.

When a reader can distinguish between necessary and unnecessary ideas and recount only the important ideas in his/her own words, he/she is summarizing. When summarizing, a critical reader paraphrases the important text. As texts grow in complexity, summarizing allows a reader to focus on the essential elements of a literary passage.

To **reflect on, identify, and explain personal connections to the text**, a reader must consider all elements of a literary text: setting, character, story events, mood, tone, and theme. Next, a reader must consider his/her personal experiences and relate them to one or more elements of a text. A reader might consider himself/herself or a friend or family member to be like a character from a text. A reader might discover that his/her attitude toward a particular subject mirrors an author's tone toward the same subject. A reader might hold the same belief revealed in a theme statement or find himself/herself in direct opposition to the idea in a theme. Once this connection is established, a critical reader is able to define how this connection is made and to construct meaning from a text, citing both text and personal details.

To **explain the implications of the text for the reader and/or society**, a reader must first consider ideas from a text that involve the reader in a personal way. A source for such ideas could be the events that befall certain characters, unfamiliar settings, the author's tone toward certain subjects, or thematic development of the text. A critical reader should define the literary element and then explain the level of involvement with that element and the effect it has had upon the reader's thinking. For example, a reader who has always been ambivalent about preserving the forests might alter his/her opinion after reading a text where forest preservation is promoted through theme. Through the explanation, the reader clarifies his/her own thought processing and makes his/her position clear to others.

Public Release #1 - Selected Response (SR) Item

Handout(s):

- Saved by a Fly

Reading Grade 3 Objective 3.A.6.a

Read the story 'Saved by a Fly' and answer the following question. What is the main idea of the story?

- A. A moose drinks all the water from a river
- B. A group of animals is afraid of a big moose
- C. A fly gets rid of a troublesome moose
- D. A group of animals is always quarreling

Correct Answer:

C

Public Release Item #2 Brief Constructed Response (BCR) Item with Annotated Student Responses

Question

Read the story 'Saved by a Fly' and answer the following question.

What lesson could someone learn from this story? Use details from the story to support your answer.

Write your answer on your answer document.

Annotated Student Responses

A lesson you could learn from this story is never give up. For example, when Fly kept on biting and buzzing at Moose and then he almost drowned he didn't give up he kept on going.

Score for Sample Student Response #1: Rubric Score 3

Annotation, Using the Rubric: This response demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the text. The student provides a lesson, "never give up," and uses specific events from the text to illustrate the lesson: "Fly kept on biting and buzzing ... he almost drowned ... he didn't give up he kept on going."

Someone could learn little people can do big things too. For example, the fly was little and scared the moose away.

Score for Sample Student Response #2: Rubric Score 2

Annotation, Using the Rubric: This response demonstrates a general understanding of the text. The student provides a lesson, "little people can do big things too," and uses text-relevant information to show how this lesson relates to the text: "... fly was little and scared the moose away."

The lesson that someone
could learn from this fable
is you can do anything if you
try hard enough and you don't
give up.

Score for Sample Student Response #3: Rubric Score 1

Annotation, Using the Rubric: This response demonstrates a minimal understanding of the text. The student states a lesson that shows some understanding of the text: "... you can do anything if you try hard enough and you don't give up."

Not to drink all the animals
water because a bee will hurt you.
At some time bee's can be nice to
you.

Score for Sample Student Response #4: Rubric Score 0

Annotation, Using the Rubric: This response is irrelevant to the question. The lesson stated is not supported by the text.

Handouts

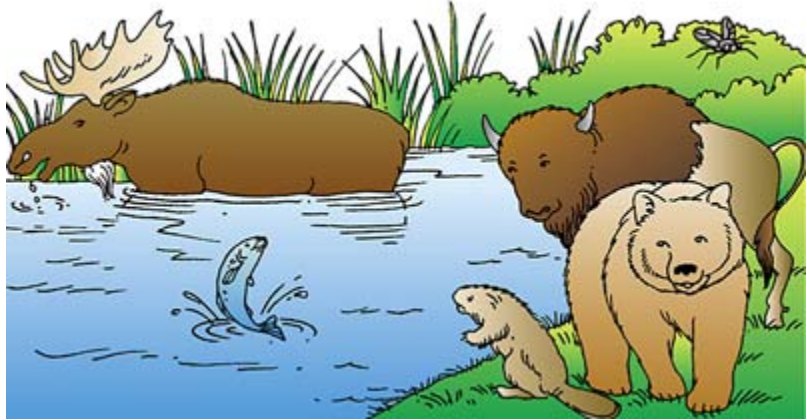
Saved by a Fly

A Native American Story
retold by Feana Tu'akoi

One day, a giant moose came to drink at a river. He was very big and very thirsty. All day long, he drank and he drank.

The other animals watched as the river started to empty. They were very worried.

"What shall we do?" moaned Beaver. "If Moose drinks all the water, our homes will be ruined."



"It's OK for you," burbled Salmon. "You can live on land if you have to. Without the river, I'll die."

"He's got to be stopped," roared Buffalo. "Someone should scare him away."

"Well, don't look at me!" growled Bear. "That moose is twice my size. One flick of his antlers, and I'd be off to the moon."

The others nodded sadly. Bear was right. They were all too scared to try to make Moose leave.

"Let me try," buzzed Fly.

The animals looked at Fly in surprise. Then they started to laugh.

"Ha, ha. How could you stop Moose? Look at the size of you!" roared Buffalo.

"Just watch me try," buzzed Fly.

Fly flew onto Moose's shoulder and bit him sharply. Moose flicked his enormous head, but he kept on drinking.

Fly landed on Moose's back leg, biting hard. Moose stamped until the ground shook, but he kept on drinking.

Fly moved to Moose's front leg and bit again. Moose was getting mad now. He splashed his leg into the river to get rid of Fly, but he kept on drinking.

Poor Fly nearly drowned, but he was determined not to give up. He flew hard to dry out his wings. Then he stopped to get his breath back.

The other animals were worried. "Come back, Fly," they called. "We're sorry we made fun of you! Stop before you get hurt!"

But Fly didn't listen. He made one last, angry attack. He zoomed around and around Moose's head, biting and buzzing madly. Moose shook his head, stamped his feet, and splashed in the water. But Fly kept on buzzing and biting.

Moose snorted and blew. He lifted his head and gave a mighty roar. But Fly kept on buzzing and biting.

Fly was driving Moose crazy. Moose ran up and down the riverbank. He stomped and roared, making the ground shake as if there were an earthquake. He rubbed himself against the trees, then rolled in the water. But Fly kept on buzzing and biting.

At last, realizing that he was beaten, Moose left the river for good.

The animals were overjoyed.

"You've saved my life!" burbled Salmon.

Fly smiled and buzzed tiredly. "Well, that just proves you can do anything if you try hard enough!"

Rubric - Brief Constructed Response (BCR)

Score 3

The response demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the text.

- Addresses the demands of the question
- Effectively uses text-relevant¹ information to clarify or extend understanding

Score 2

The response demonstrates a general understanding of the text.

- Partially addresses the demands of the question
- Uses text-relevant¹ information to show understanding

Score 1

The response demonstrates a minimal understanding of the text.

- Minimally addresses the demands of the question
- Uses minimal information to show some understanding of the text in relation to the question

Score 0

The response is completely incorrect, irrelevant to the question, or missing.²

Notes:

¹ Text-relevant: This information may or may not be an exact copy (quote) of the text but is clearly related to the text and often shows an analysis and/or interpretation of important ideas. Students may incorporate information to show connections to relevant prior experience as appropriate.

² An exact copy (quote) or paraphrase of the question that provides no new relevant information will receive a score of "0".

Rubric Document Date: June 2003